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ABSTRACT

As DeKalb Community College (DCC) expanded from one campus to four campuses, it became increasingly difficult for the college to conduct business related to curriculum and academic policies in an effective and efficient manner. In 1981, DCC's then new president reorganized the campuses and created a Faculty Senate to perform functions previously performed by a curriculum committee, academic policies committee, and the Joint Faculty. The primary purpose of the Faculty Senate is to evaluate and submit recommendations for all proposals related to curriculum and academic policy. Voting membership is composed of professional staff from all academic divisions, student services offices, and learning resource centers on all campuses. Each of these groups elects a representative who serves a term of 1 year, assuming office at the first Senate meeting of the fall quarter. The Faculty Senate also has six ex-officio members designated by the office they hold in the college governance structure, who serve in an advisory capacity only and do not hold voting privileges. The voting membership of the Senate is comprised almost totally of persons who do not have administrative duties, and the leadership of the Senate is assumed almost exclusively by professional teaching staff. Faculty members who have previously established credibility as leaders among the total faculty are, for the most part, elected to the Senate, and at times assert themselves against their colleagues in the Senate as well as against the administration. A recent example was a lengthy debate over the business department's effort to reduce the history requirements in the core curriculum, which resulted in the defeat of the business department's proposal in the interest of ensuring all students a liberal education. (DMM)

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CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A FACULTY SENATE FOR A MULTI-CAMPUS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A FACULTY SENATE FOR A MULTI-CAMPUS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by

Robert Walker and Jacque Poythress

DeKalb Community College was established by the DeKalb County Public School District and the Board of Education so that graduates of the School System who wanted two years of academic postsecondary education would have the opportunity to acquire such education convenient to home and place of employment. We are unique in that the Collegiate Division is Georgia's only community operated institution of higher learning. DeKalb College was established under the Junior College Act of 1958 following a constitutional amendment and a bond referendum by the citizens of the County. The Central Collegiate Campus was opened in September, 1964, and became associated with the DeKalb Area Technical School and the Adult Education Division of the DeKalb School System in 1972 to form DeKalb Community College.

Our South Campus opened in the fall of 1972 and the North Campus began operation as a permanent facility in the fall of 1979. DeKalb Community College has been a pioneer in open door admissions and, in an era of academic retrenchment, opened a new campus (North) which has more than doubled enrollment in the four years of its existance. The current enrollment of the three collegiate campuses and the technical campus is 17,370.

At the time the College was created, a Curriculum Committee and an Academic Policies Committee were developed to consider proposals germane to their areas. Leadership for these committees was taken from representatives from various academic

departments, either elected by their peers or appointed by the department chairman. After study and argument, curriculum and policy proposals were then reported to the full faculty for discussion and vote.

With the above mentioned reorganization in 1972, the Technical Campus was added to the Central Campus collegiate division and the South Campus began operation. The Curriculum and Academic Policies Committees were then broadened to include representatives from the new campus and technical school but they still reported to the full joint faculty. When North Campus was added in 1979, this procedure for curriculum changes and for changes in academic policy remained the same.

As the College expanded and the four campuses were represented on the Curriculum and the Academic Policies Committees, it became more and more difficult to conduct business in an effective and efficient manner. Travel time, teaching schedules and other College commitments had to be considered when scheduling meetings. (It is ten miles from the South Campus to Central Campus and fourteen miles from the North Campus to Central Campus where all meetings were held.) Even then, all members were not in regular attendance at meetings. Consequently, joint faculty meetings became too tedious and too diffuse for addressing issues that were presented to the joint faculty for discussion and action.

In 1981, a new president was chosen by the Board of Education and he reorganized the three campuses, expanding an existing District Office and creating a Faculty Senate to perform the functions which were formerly performed by the Curriculum Committee,

Academic Policies Committee and the Joint Faculty. The charge to the Senate was:

> To serve as a body representative of the total College, to which proposals for curriculum and academic policy changes are to be submitted. The Senate articulates, evaluates, and recommends to the Administrative Cabinet proposed changes, additional courses and programs, and deletions of courses and programs.

The voting membership of the Senate is composed of professional staff from all academic divisions, student services offices and learning resources centers on all campuses. Each of these groups elect their representative to the Senate during the spring quarter prior to the academic year during which they will serve. This was the first time that the teaching faculty had been given the opportunity to elect from its various departments a body of leaders independent of the administration. This was particularly evident in the freedom to choose campus chairpersons and elect a college-wide chairperson of the Senate, a position which rotates from campus to campus on a yearly basis. Additionally, each Senator has an elected or appointed alternate who attends Senate meetings in the event the Senator cannot attend. Senators serve for a term of one year and assume office at the first Senate meeting of the fall quarter. These people meet and confer with their constituents at the campus level and vote their majority opinion. They also have a forum to speak and debate the issues relevant to their department.

The Faculty Senate also has six ex-officio members who are designated solely by the office or position which they hold in the College governance structure. Five of the ex-officio members represent the offices of vice-president of academic affairs, vice-

president of student services, finance, data processing, and instructional administration from the technical campus. The sixth ex-officio member is the past chairperson of the Senate who serves as the parliamentarian. Ex-officio members serve in an advisory capacity and act as resource persons for the Faculty Senate. They do not possess voting privileges on any matters. Further, they speak only if invited to by the Senate members.

Department or division chairpersons are not usually elected to serve in the Senate, although they are not excluded from serving. The voting membership of the Senate is comprised almost totally of persons who do not have administrative duties, and the leadership in the Senate is assumed almost exclusively by professional teaching staff. Many faculty leaders who had previously displayed such characteristics in their own faculty or department meetings were elected to the Senate by their peers. They were empowered to act on behalf of their constituents and to assume the authority necessary to effect change and preserve the integrity of the Senate. These individuals continue to pursue answers as dogmatically as before and resist any attempt to be dictated to by the administration.

As stated earlier, the primary purpose of the Faculty Senate at DeKalb Community College is to evaluate and submit recommendations for all proposals related to curriculum and academic policy. The recommendations of the Senate are presented to the Administrative Cabinet of the College through the office of the Vice-President of Academic Affairs. Though the Administrative Cabinet

possesses veto power, it is rare that they exercise that power.

Faculty members that had previously established credibility as leaders among the total faculty, were, for the most part, elected to the Senate. These people have continued to exemplify leadership traits in the Senate especially in areas of academic policy and the core curriculum. At times these people assert themselves against their colleagues in the Senate as well as against the administration. A recent example involved an attempt by the business department to reduce the requirements in the core curriculum which directly affected the history department. The primary purpose was to accommodate business majors after they transferred to a specific receiving institution which required fewer hours in social science for their majors. Lengthy debate ensued among members of the Senate, regardless of academic discipline. The proposal was defeated because most of the Senate members, reflecting the preferences of their constituents believed that: 1) DeKalb Community College could not tailor its curriculum to meet the varied requirements of all institutions, 2) this change would not only affect business students but all students since it affected the core curriculum, and 3) that most disciplines were the best authority for requirements within their own areas.

Because the majority of the faculty believed in the total education of the student, the Faculty Senate acted in the best interest of all students to ensure those students a liberal education during their enrollment at DeKalb Community College.

This instance is related to the only purpose of our embryo

Senate, to improve the curriculum and standards of the institution and to make it more relevant to its students in their pursuit of a meaningful education.

DR. ROBERT WALKER

Bob Walker, a psychology instructor for eleven years at DeKalb Community College, was on the faculty at the opening of both South (1972) and North (1979) Campuses. He is currently acting chairman of the Social Science Division at the North Campus. He also is in his second year as North Campus Chairman of the Faculty Senate.

MS. JACQUE POYTHRESS

Jacque Poythress is an instructor in Physical Education at DeKalb Community College, North Campus, and is Chairperson of the College-wide Faculty Senate. She is in her fourtheenth year as an instructor at the College and has taught at all three campuses.

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